

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 231862

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

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FOLLOWING STATE 231862 ACTION SUVA NOV 26TH

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, US, XP

SUBJECT: AMERICAN SAMOA BACKGROUND

REF: SUVA 849

FOR WOOD FROM EA/ANP

### 1. RECENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN AMERICAN SAMOA:

A GUBERNATIONAL STUDY COMMISSION WAS CREATED THIS YEAR TO FOCUS ON ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES AND PROCEDURES REQUIRED FOR POPULAR ELECTION OF GOVERNOR AND LT. GOVERNOR. THIS MEASURE FULLY SUPPORTED BY DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR, PRESENT GOVERNOR, CHAIRMAN OF THE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON TERRITORIAL AFFAIRS AND SEVERAL OTHER US CONGRESS MEMBERS.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS WERE MADE TO THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION HELD IN JULY AND AMENDMENTS PROVIDING FOR POPULAR ELECTIONS AS WELL AS INCREASES IN MEMBERSHIP AND SALARIES FOR LOCAL LEGISLATURE WERE PRESENTED TO THE DELEGATES. THE CONVENTION ADOPTED NEW CONSTITUTION  
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PAGE 02 STATE 231862

WITH THESE AMENDMENTS INCLUDED. HOWEVER, NEW CONSTITUTION

DEFEATED BY OVER 2 TO 1 MARGIN IN SPECIAL ELECTION HELD NOVEMBER 6. THEREFORE FOR SHORT TERM AT LEAST INTERNAL GOVERNMENT OPERATION AND US-SAMOAN RELATIONS WILL MAINTAIN STATUS QUO.

2. SAMOA'S ECONOMY:

ECONOMIC GROWTH DURING THE PAST FEW YEARS HAS BEEN RAPID. UNEMPLOYMENT HAS DROPPED FROM AN ESTIMATED 26 PERCENT TO AN ESTIMATED 11 PERCENT IN THE PAST THREE YEARS. BOTH THE STAR KIST AND VAN CAMP CANNERIES ARE INVESTING IN EXCESS OF ONE MILLION DOLLARS EACH IN PHYSICAL PLANT EXPANSION AND THE TUNA FLEETS ARE BEING INCREASED SUBSTANTIALLY. THE TWO CANNERIES AND THE DIRECTLY RELATED SHIP REPAIR INDUSTRY EMPLOY NEARLY 2,000 PEOPLE AS COMPARED WITH 1,350 THREE YEARS AGO.

IN THE INDUSTRIAL SECTOR OF THE ECONOMY, THE NEWLY ESTABLISHED PACIFIC TIME CORPORATION EXPORTED NEARLY DOLLARS 1.5 MILLION WORTH OF WATCHES DURING 1972. A NEW CLOTHING FACTORY WAS STARTED IN 1972 AND CREATED ABOUT 180 NEW JOBS. ARRANGEMENTS FOR A JEWELRY MANUFACTURING COMPANY, A SECOND CLOTHING MANUFACTURER AND OTHER PRIVATE BUSINESSES ARE EITHER COMPLETED OR BEING PLANNED. EXPORT-IMPORT FIGURES AGAIN REFLECT THE GENERAL HEALTH OF THE SAMOAN ECONOMY. TOTAL EXPORTS IN 1972 WERE OVER DOLLARS 53 MILLION AS COMPARED WITH DOLLARS 41 MILLION IN 1971 AND ABOUT DOLLARS 36 MILLION IN 1970. IMPORT FIGURES FOR THE SAME PERIOD WERE TWENTY FOUR MILLION IN 1972, NINETEEN MILLION IN 1971 AND FIFTEEN MILLION DOLLARS IN 1970. THE INCREASE IN TRAFFIC IN SAMOAN PORTS HAS BEEN COMMENSURATE WITH THIS GENERAL ECONOMIC GROWTH AND HAS PLACED A STRAIN ON THE PRESENT FACILITIES. STUDIES FOR PORT EXPANSION HAVE BEEN UNDERTAKEN AND HAVE BEEN COMPLETED.

THE DEVELOPMENT BANK OF AMERICAN SAMOA SAW HEAVY INCREASED ACTIVITIES DURING 1972 AND, AT THE PRESENT TIME, HAS LARGELY COMMITTED ITS AVAILABLE CAPITAL WITH DOLLARS 2,900,000 IN DIRECT LOANS OR LOAN GUARANTEES FOR HOUSING AND HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AND

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 STATE 231862

DOLLARS 1,300,000 FOR LOANS TO THE PRIVATE BUSINESS SECTOR. EFFORTS TO SECURE ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENT LOAN FUNDS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT BANK CONTINUE WITH THE SUPPORT AND COOPERATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR. THE BANK OF HAWAII, A PRIVATE LENDING INSTITUTION, REPORTS THAT IT HAS INCREASED LOANS TO PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS BY MORE THAN DOLLARS 1 MILLION ABOVE LOANS IN FORCE BY ITS PREDECESSOR, THE GOVERNMENT-OPERATED BANK OF

AMERICAN SAMOA.

3. GENERAL:

THE TERRITORY OF AMERICAN SAMOA LIES ABOUT 2,300 MILES SOUTHEAST OF HAWAII AND SOME 1,600 MILES NORTHEAST OF NEW ZEALAND. THE TERRITORY IS COMPOSED OF SEVEN LUSH, TROPICAL ISLANDS, THE ONLY UNITED STATES POSSESSION SOUTH OF THE EQUATOR. THE 1970 FEDERAL CENSUS GAVE AMERICAN SAMOA A TOTAL POPULATION OF 27,159. THE AMERICAN SAMOANS ARE NOT UNITED STATES CITIZENS BUT ARE CLASSED AS NATIONALS, A STATUS WHICH GIVES THEM FREE ACCESS TO ENTRY TO THE UNITED STATES. THE AMERICAN SAMOANS ARE CLOSELY RELATED TO THE HAWAIIANS, TAHITIANS, TONGANS AND TO NEW ZEALAND'S MAORIS. THEY ARE FRIENDLY AND GENEROUS, TAKE GREAT PRIDE IN THEIR HERITAGE AND ARE TOTALLY DEDICATED TO CEREMONIAL AND MYTHOLOGICAL PRACTICES WHICH ARE CENTURIES OLD. THEY ARE AMONG THE LAST REMAINING TRUE POLYNESIANS AND THEY CLING STEADFASTLY TO THEIR SAMOAN CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS. THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR STRONGLY SUPPORTS THEIR DESIRE TO PRESERVE THEIR CULTURE WHILE ENCOURAGING THEM TO ADVANCE THE FIELDS OF HEALTH AND EDUCATION.

RE TTPI STATUS TALKS DISCUSSED IN EARLIER SEPTTEL, TALKS RECESSED NOVEMBER 21 WITH NO BASIC NEW AGREEMENTS AFTER INCONCLUSIVE DISCUSSION OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE IN POST-TRUSTEESHIP PERIOD. MICRONESIANS REFUSED TO DISCUSS OTHER SECTIONS OF DRAFT COMPACT  
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PAGE 04 STATE 231862

OF FREE ASSOCIATION PENDING AGREEMENT ON US SUBSIDIES AND INSISTED UPON LEVELS OF FINANCING SUBSTANTIALLY HIGHER THAN UNDER TRUSTEESHIP. KISSINGEJUNQUOTE RUSH

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